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Turmeric Factories and Mathadi Labour Act

6.1) Introduction

The workers unions tried to solve the problems of working women in turmeric factories. They try to solve but all problems were not solved. Payment leave, permanent work, pension after retirement, casual leave these problems remained. In the factory area there are no facilities like nursery, toilet facilities, clean drinking water, room for the rest and afternoon meal etc. These problems have remained unsolved.

The standard of the working women in turmeric factory is low. They live in one room, in own house / rental house / slum area. In the slum area there are many problems and these problems are faced by these women. There are problems like small house, lack of entertainment, drainage, health problem. There is also problem of their children's education. Government should not only give books and notebooks free of cost but government should take some steps to provide them some kind of boarding facilities. The problem of their children's education and life is more important for them.

Government should try to provide them free house or provide the loan to build the house on low interest rate and try to establish separate society to raise their living standard for woman working in turmeric factory. To enrich their living standard NGOs and union is also taking hard efforts.

The working women in turmeric factory are suffering from lack of knowledge, blind faith, poor health, no nutritious food, low living standard. They are trying to find good tomorrow with bright future.

6.2) After Mathadi Labour Act

Before applicable of Mathadi labour law the factory owners had not given any facilities to worker. Working women in turmeric factories are not permanent. They are getting payment day to day or weekly. There was no planning of worker's payment. Owner's need and will decide payment of worker. No working hours were decided to work. The workers are seasonal. The worker has no choice to decide the working hours or working time, payment and any other facilities. The workers were not permanent so the question of giving any facilities did not arise.

Mathadi labour law came in to force on 30th June 1969 in Maharashtra. The law changed the workers life. But it is not followed strictly in all districts. Where worker union work effectively, the factory owner accepted it. But in Sangli districts, there was no labour organization so they did not follow the Mathadi labour law.

Bapusaheb Magdum built the union and struggled for 15 years to apply the act to turmeric factory worker. First 10 years he built the union and struggled for establishment and development of labour organization. And next 5 years he got success in the enforcement of this labour law. Due to this law worker got the benefit for working security from the risky working and provident fund. This law also decided the working hours, equal payment, age of working etc.

But in some factories like oil and turmeric factory owner do not accept the Mathadi labour law. After many struggles they accepted this act only to the male workers. So the working women in turmeric factory are not getting any benefit of this law. But these working women in turmeric factories built the organization and they declared “We are also Mathadi labour”. So the female workers in turmeric factories built the organization and struggled for 5 years in 1992 to 1997. After 5 years struggle government and factory owners both agreed that the female workers are also Mathadi labour and they applied this Act to female workers also. 450 female workers in turmeric factory got the benefits of this law and they got the first bonus payment at that time.

After the application of Mathadi labour Act the worker’s life is changed. The owners pressure has decreased.

Working women in turmeric factory mostly come from Jat, Atpadi, and Kavatemahankal talukas which are drought prone area. These women’s economic condition was bad. Three generation of these women were staying in Sangli. These women’s mother in law were working in this kind of work, women worker also works and her daughter- in- law also work in turmeric factories. These women are illiterate, and most women are from backward castes.

. Nearby 600 women are working in the turmeric factory. In the turmeric factory working women are divided in two parts. One is cleaning the turmeric and another is to make turmeric powder.

First of all some women cleans the turmeric. They make classification of the turmeric in gatta turmeric and iron turmeric. This work is done in front of turmeric dump. So that they do not face the problem of turmeric powder dust. The woman here was getting Rs.47 rupees for a one day. To make the turmeric powder from turmeric seed means to convert turmeric seed in turmeric powder with the help of machine. The women's working on machine gets Rs.52 per day. All women are packaging the bags of turmeric powder.

The women working for making powder suffers highly from the problem of dust. The working women in turmeric factories are not permanent. They are temporary workers. They are getting the work for season of three months. At other time they are getting the work as per demand of owner of the factory.

First time when union was established the numbers of working women were use not to present union meeting. They were not ready to become members of union because they feared that if they accept the membership of union the owner will terminate their services. When the woman is terminated then getting other job soon is difficult, so there would be problem to run the house. But union leader's efforts and struggles got together and turmeric women factory workers were made a member of union.

Working women in turmeric factory spend her whole life to struggle with the poverty. Poverty is there all the time. Womens' all earning are spent on daily family's primary needs and household needs. The payments were not sufficient to provide all daily needs, so loan was taken. The Mathadi board established the credit society to give loan to the worker but Credit Societies had

limitation to give the loan. So extra loan was taken from money lender. Money lender's interest rate was high. But they have no other way to live.

The husbands of working women in turmeric factory are drinking liquor. So they all money spend on drinking liquor. They will not give the money at home to buy basic needs. Near about 70 percent women's husband are drinkers so they do not give the money to run the house, so women try to run the house in the money she earns.

In turmeric factory there is struggle between owner and workers. The union members try to solve the problems. If the union members do not get success in it, the case is transferred to court. But this situation comes in rarely.

When the owner decides to terminate the worker from the work he has to take the permission of Mathadi board. The Mathadi labour board tries to understand both side of owners' and worker's and take well decision. If the workers side is right the board convinces the owner and if the owner's side is right board convinces the worker. But if both sides are firm in that position, the board takes decision to go in to the court and to take support of law.

India got the freedom but this freedom has not given any benefit to the workers working in unorganized sector. Their services are not permanent. India got freedom but worker is not free. Employees of bank, teacher, and government workers are secured in these services but worker in unorganized sector was not secure in their job.

Mr. P Domalo builds the worker union in Mumbai for the workers working in the Dockyard. With his impression and encouragement, Bapusaheb Magdum decided to build the workers union in Maharashtra. Mr. Magdum formed the committee on 13th June 1969. The porter got the protection under the act of unorganization sector act. But government not applied the act to all fields where the workers and the porters working in different areas of business houses. For example in Dule district the act came in to force a few days back. Where the workers union is strong and effective, there the act is applicable.

Due to Mathadi labour law women are getting the benefit of provident fund, gratuity, bonus, and accidental insurance and medical claim. With the help of this law the workers are getting their payment through the committee. The government and union got the success to convince the owners to submit their salary and 26% tax to committee before 5th of every month. The committee distributes the salary to the workers and the 26% tax is utilized to give the facilities like provided fund, gratuity, and medical claim. These type of facilities gives stability to the workers.

The worker associated with committee established the credit society. The person who can't borrow the money, now they are getting the loan of Rs. 15000/-. Those workers get the freedom from money lenders. The workers can get the additional Rs.15000/ loan on low interest rate. To take this facility the borrower has to repay the 50% of the loan amount of previous loan and also require two guarantors working in the same factory. The plus point of this credit society is that the only 10% of accounts are not active.

The financial year is up to 31st March every year and 9% of the total years salary has to be given to the workers as bonus. The workers registered with board committee can not be dismissed by the owner. For that the owner can ask committee to solve the problem. In this process the owner has to tell the problem to the committee and the committee appoints the jury to solve the problem. If the jury can't solve the problem the problem is taken to the board of directors.

6.2.1) Limit of age

Before the Mathadi labour act there was no age limit of working in turmeric factory. The 7-8 year old children were also working in turmeric factory. But after application of Mathadi labour Act, the age limit is minimum 14 years. The person who have completed 14 years can work in turmeric factory.

6.2.2) Decided age of retirement

Before the Mathadi labour act, the woman retirement age depended on her will and till her health was good. But after making Mathadi labour Act, the retirement age is fixed and it is 60years. After 60 years she can't work in turmeric factory.

6.2.3) Provident fund and gratuity benefit

After Mathadi labour act, the working women got benefit of provident fund and gratuity. The payment was not given to workers directly but it was deposited at board office. The board deducts the amount for provident fund and gratuity and pays remaining amount to the workers. At the time of retirement

women gets the amount of provident fund and gratuity. The amount which working women get is Rs.80000 to Rs.1 Lakh.

6.2.4) Bonus

After Mathadi labour Act, the working women in turmeric factory got the benefit of bonus payment. The worker gets the bonus payment 9% of the total salary of the year. The year is calculated up to 31 March of every year for the payment of bonus.

6.2.5) Accidental insurance benefit

Mathadi labour Act gives the worker accidental insurance benefit. In the factory if any accident takes place the workers gets the compensation of medical expenses. Due to accident, if any worker gets partial or full disability, then a worker gets the compensation from insurance scheme. This facility gives the worker helping hand in their non working days.

6.2.6) Payment in time

Before Mathadi labour Act the worker were not getting the payment in given time. They use to get payment on daily basis or weekly basis. There was no planning for workers payment. The owners need and wish use to decide payment of workers. But after application of Mathadi labour Act the worker is getting the payment in time. The owner deposits the payment at Mathadi Board on or before date 6th of every month and it is paid to the workers.

6.2.7) Working hours decided

After Mathadi labour act, the working hours have been decided. Worker has to work 8 hours in factory. Before application of Mathadi labour act there

was no limit of working hours. The workers use to start his work at 8.00 a.m. and work till 8.00 p.m. There was no limit for working hours. No extra payment was paid for night duty. The workers are also seasonal. The worker had no choice to decide the working hours/ working time, payment /scale and any other facilities.

6.2.8) Job security

Mathadi labour act provides to the worker, job security. Before implementation of the Mathadi labour act, the owner could terminate the worker any time or any little cause like 5 minutes late. But after application of the act, the owner can not terminate the workers without permission of Mathadi board. When the owner wants to terminate the workers from the factory, he has to take the permission of Mathadi board. The owner gives intimation to the board and board tries to convince both the party. After hearing both side the board takes right decision. The Mathadi labour board tries to understand both sides i.e. owners side and also workers side and takes decision. If the workers side is right then board tries to convince the owner and if the owner's side is right then board tries to convince the worker. But if both sides are strong in same position, at that time board takes decision to go to court and take support of law.

6.2.9) Relief from owner's pressure

Before Mathadi labour act the workers were under the pressure of owner because they were not permanent. They thought that owner will terminate him from work and this was always in their mind so they were facing all unjustified problem and owners were not giving any facilities to the workers.

But after the Mathadi labour law the situation has changed. Now owner can't terminate the labour without permission of mathadi labour board.

6.2.10) Increment of payment

After every two year the agreement between Hamal panchayat and Merchant association gets renewed regarding the terms and conditions of wages and working conditions. After the renewal of agreement, the working women in turmeric factories gets the increment in payment.

6.2.11) Rest timing decided

The Mathadi labour law made some provision of rest hours. The workers have to work hard in the factory. After hard work workers need some rest also. At the time of lunch the workers get two hours time for rest. As per convenience of workers and owners they decided the time for rest from 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

6.2.12) Other Facilities provided

Before application of Mathadi labour act, the owners were not aware about the facilities which he has to provide to the worker. There were no facilities in the factory like clean drinking water, toilet facilities etc. But after making Mathadi labour act there are some rules laid down by government to provide these facilities to the worker.

6.2.13) Loan facility

After Mathadi labour law the Mathadi Credit Society was established. The working area of Mathadi Credit Society is Sangli district. Mathadi Credit Society is operating in very good condition. In this society the women are

getting the loan of Rs.15000/-any time. If she returns the half amount of previous loan and she needs another loan the loan is sanctioned. To avail the loan the women worker has to provide only two guarentors working in the same turmeric factory.

Before Mathadi labour act, nobody gave the loan to the workers. The bank do not provide loan to the workers because the workers were not having any guarentor. The owners do not give any advance. So the workers go to private money lenders. The money lenders charge high interest rate. But the Mathadi Credit Society started to provide loan to the workers at low interest rate.

6.2.14) Social awareness programs

The Mathadi board is conducting social awareness programmes for workers. They organized various programmes to solve their social problems. The board organized seminars on the various subjects like problem of blind faith, and the main problem of drinking alcohol. They tried to refresh the minds of workers also.

6.2.15) The Credit Society

The working women in turmeric factories facing the problems of financial needs after application of Mathadi labour Act. So they decided to establish the Credit Society to meet their financial needs. They established credit society on 21st April 1995, named Mathadi Kamgar Co-operative Credit Society. This credit society has 878 members in its working area. The capital of this credit society in the year 2008- 2009 was Rs.50, 0,000/- and reserve fund was Rs.573,68/-. The society distributed loans in the year 2002 of Rs.64, 65,893/- and society earned profit of Rs.5,11,760/- with 'A' grade in audit.

6.3) The aims of Mathadi worker co-operative Credit Society are:

6.3.1) Provide loan facility to worker

The prime aim of the Credit Society is to provide loan facility to workers at 14% interest rate. The worker can get loan of Rupees 15000/-at any time. For this she has to provide some documents only. The Credit Society decided the maximum amount of loan is Rs15000/- only.

6.3.2) Providing loan on time and need.

The Credit Society provides loan to the worker on the time and according to need. When the worker needs money he/she can complete the Credit Societies norms then he/she get Rs.15000/ loan immediately. When worker demands for loan and completed the document he/she can get loan within 2/3hours. The money of loan getting to the worker within one day so there is no need to wait.

6.3. 3) No need of additional guarantor.

When the women working in turmeric factory need the loan, they have to just apply for it. There is no need to give additional guarantee and mortgage also. They have to provide only signatures of two women workers working in the same factory as guarantor.

6.3.4) Money Saving

The Credit Society also created awareness among the women working in turmeric factory to save their money for future. The Credit Society provided the facility of saving account also. The Credit Society suggested workers to deposit some money at regular interval for their future benefit.

6.4) Mathadi labour board

After applicable of Mathadi labour Act the Mathadi labour board was established. The Mathadi labour board is trying to solve the problems of worker. The board got 50% success in solving problems. The workers have to pay the fees to board to become member of the board. By paying fees of Rs5/- the workers can get membership for lifetime. If an owner of the factory want the membership he has to pay fees of Rs.25/- then he will get the membership for lifetime. The Mathadi board not only works for problems but also work for social causes. The board works for following works.

6.4.1) Helps for children's education

The board tries to give help for children's education. They provide books, notebooks and Rs.200/- per month as help to children education. Working women in turmeric factories are economically backward so their children can't complete the education. Board also tries to give some financial help also. Thus they are trying to solve the problems of children's education of the workers. The children who get highest marks in examination, the Mathadi board gave them gift also. It gives inspiration to children. The Mathadi board tries to educate the children of workers.

6.4.2) Agreement for wages

The board had taken the responsibility of contract to decide the wages of the worker. The board members and Merchant Association jointly decide the rate of wages. They decided that after every two year they change decide the rate of wages. Due to this contract the working women in turmeric factory get the wages updated.

6.4.3) Women worker saving money

Mathadi board suggested some friendly ways to the women worker to save money for their future. They also suggested the ways of small saving scheme. The board also formed some groups under the scheme of Mahila Bachat Gat.

6.4.4) Pension

Mathadi board tries to get pension for working women in turmeric factories because in new generation joint family system vanished. Majority of women are living separately and their children are not giving money to them. The workers working in this sector have no other income source after retirement. Hence the question of their lively hood arises. So the Mathadi board tried that government should give pension to them The Mathadi board is trying to convince the government to start the pension after the retirement. The government also agreed with the proposal but it is not implemented.

6.5) Union leader :Bapusaheb Magdum

He was bourn on 15th June 1932 at Samdoli in Sangli district. His father was poor farmer. He was educated up to 6th standard. Due to family's economic condition he could not complete his education. He came to Sangli for search of work. In 1946 he joined the Rastra Seva Dal. In 1960, he worked full time for worker movement. He traveled on bicycle in sangli district to build union of porters, weaving workers, and other unorganised workers. He fought to give justice and right to workers for that he was jailed for some time. He worked as secretary of Hind Mazdoor Sabha. He also worked in Maharashtra State Hamal Mathadi Mahamandal. He also participated in United Maharashtra movement. Goa mukti ladha, rehabilitation of people affected under various projects. He was facilitated with Sane Guruji Pratisthan puraskar.

In 1969 Mathadi labour law applied in Maharashtra state. But it was not applied in all districts. Where worker unions were working strongly, the act was applied there. At that time Bapusaheb Magdum accepted the challenge to build the union of hamal in Sangli district.

In Sangli District Bapusaheb Magdum established Organization of kotawal, Hamal panchayat, and Sangli District Talaidar Sabha, Tasgoan Nagarpalika Kamgar Sabha, Thearte Kamgar Sabha, Gumasta Kamgar Sabha and Press workers.

After ten years of fight Bapusaheb Magdum got the success to the approval of the Mathadi Labour Act. But unfortunately women workers were omitted form this law. Again Bapusaheb Magdum had to fight with the government and owners for five years. He got success in getting the approval of the act women.

He established co-operative societies to every organizations and he helped workers to get loan with little interest. All these societies run by the workers. They take the decision how to run the society .These societies run programmes like prohibition, family-planning removal of blind-faith and so on.

Bapusaheb Magdum had a strong faith in Democratic Socialism. He tried his level best to put these objectives in life. He worked throughout his life for the benefit of unorganized workers and farmers. Last fifty years he is on struggle against injustice. It is a long march. He has to walk on this path.

Bapusaheb Magdum built the union and struggled for 15 years to apply the act to factory worker. Due to this act worker got the benefit for working

security from the risky working, provident fund. This act also decided the working hours, equal payment, age of retirement etc.

The female workers in turmeric factories built the organization and struggled for 5 years in 1992 to 1997. After 5years struggle government and factory owners both agreed that the female workers are also Mathadi labour and they applied this law to female worker also.

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Turmeric through Grander



Turmeric powder ready to use

CHAPTER-7